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News Release

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One death reported / two-week circuit breaker in high-case areas beginning Friday at 6 p.m. / single households for all of New Brunswick for long weekend

05 October 2021

FREDERICTON (GNB) – Public Health has confirmed that a person 80-89 in Zone 4 (Edmundston region) has died as a result of COVID-19. This brings the total number of COVID-19-related deaths in the province to 69.

“On behalf of all New Brunswickers, I extend sincere condolences to this person’s family and friends,” said Premier Blaine Higgs. “Losses like this are a continued reminder that we all must follow the rules, get vaccinated and take steps to protect ourselves and everyone around us.”

“Another family is now mourning a loved one,” said Dr. Jennifer Russell, chief medical officer of health. “I offer my heartfelt condolences to this bereaved family in their time of grief.”

Public Health reported 90 new cases of COVID-19 today and 74 recoveries. The number of active cases is 782. There are 50 people hospitalized due to the virus, with 23 in an intensive care unit. No one under the age of 19 is currently hospitalized. Of those currently in hospital, 41 are unvaccinated, two are partially vaccinated and seven are fully vaccinated.

“Because of the high number of cases, we are seeing some breakthrough cases in vaccinated individuals,” said Russell. “However, the percentage of vaccinated individuals who have tested positive remains far lower than the percentage of those who are unvaccinated. Vaccines continue to be one of our most effective tools in preventing serious illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19.”

Circuit breaker to be introduced in areas with high transmission

The provincial government announced today that a circuit breaker will be put in place in certain areas of the province for 14 days beginning at 6 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 8.

The areas that will be impacted are Zone 1 (Moncton region), as far north as and including Sainte-Anne-de-Kent; Zone 3 in the upper Saint John River valley north of and including Florenceville-Bristol; and all of Zone 4 (Edmundston region).

The circuit breaker restrictions will include the following:

- People must limit their contacts to their single household, which includes individuals living together; caregivers for any member of the household; and any parent, child, sibling, grandparent or grandchild living outside the household who requires support.
- No private indoor or outdoor gatherings are permitted.

- Travel to or from circuit breaker regions is restricted, except for those who must travel for essential reasons, including work, health services, child custody, childcare or post-secondary education, or travel to events where proof of vaccination is required.
- All schools will remain open, unless advised otherwise by Public Health. Sports and extra-curricular activities will be paused for those 12 and under. No spectators will be permitted for any school sports or extra-curricular activities within the impacted areas. Details on a rapid testing program rolling out next week in all schools are available below.
- Businesses, entertainment centres and events may remain open and can continue to admit people who show proof of full vaccination and a government-issued ID. Children under 12 accompanied by a fully vaccinated adult will also be admitted.

“We must act now to prevent the virus from becoming even more entrenched in these communities,” said Russell. “Businesses and events requiring proof of vaccination can remain open as these are controlled environments and patrons are asked for ID and must be vaccinated.”

Single households for Thanksgiving weekend

To further limit the spread of the virus and prevent and reduce further hospitalizations, all New Brunswickers, including those living in areas not impacted by the circuit breaker, must limit their contacts to their single household during the Thanksgiving long weekend, between Friday, Oct. 8 at 6 p.m. and Monday, Oct. 11 at 11:59 p.m.

Individuals who show proof of full vaccination and a government-issued ID can continue to visit businesses, entertainment venues and events. Children under 12 accompanied by a fully vaccinated adult will also be admitted.

Mandatory vaccination policy

The government also announced today that all government employees in Parts I (civil service), II (education system), III (health-care system) and IV (Crown corporations), staff in long-term care facilities and staff and volunteers in schools and licensed early learning and child-care facilities must be fully vaccinated by Friday, Nov. 19.

After that date, any employee in these sectors who is not fully vaccinated and does not have a valid medical exemption will be sent home without pay. In the case of early learning and child-care facilities, failure to comply could also result in the loss of a child-care licence.

Prior to Nov. 19, individuals who are not fully vaccinated who are identified as a contact of a positive case will be required to isolate without pay for 14 days.

“It is imperative that we take swift and decisive action to get this fourth wave under control and protect our health-care system,” said Higgs. “I recognize the challenges these measures will pose for New Brunswickers, but the alternatives are worse. Cabinet, the opposition leaders and Public Health are all in agreement that these regulations are necessary to keep everyone safe.”

Rapid testing program to roll out in schools

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has collaborated with Public Health to develop a new rapid testing program for schools to help minimize disruptions to learning due to COVID-19 outbreaks.

Beginning Oct. 12, unvaccinated students who are identified as a close contact of a confirmed case will be provided with either a five- or 10-day supply of rapid tests, depending on the last possible exposure date to the confirmed case, along with instructions. Tests may be sent home with students or picked up by parents the following day, depending upon when the school is notified of a confirmed case.

Unvaccinated students will be required to self-isolate for a period of at least 24 hours while they take their first two rapid tests. Unless otherwise advised by Public Health, students will be able to return to school once they have recorded two negative tests and if they have no symptoms. They will be required to continue to test daily until the end of the period as prescribed by Public Health through instructions they receive with their kits to continue attending school.

To support these plans, schools will also be asking students who are vaccinated to voluntarily provide proof of vaccination so that they may return to class as quickly as possible, even when a case has been confirmed at a school. This aligns with current Public Health guidance on self-isolation requirements. Students who do not provide proof of vaccination or participate in rapid testing programs will be required to self-isolate as prescribed by Public Health.

Students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, must stay home and get a PCR test through Public Health if they have received notification that they are a close contact and have even one symptom.

Students who are vaccinated or are participating in rapid testing who have no symptoms may also continue to engage in extracurricular activities as they regularly would.

"We always anticipated there would be cases in schools and we know there will continue to be cases throughout this school year," said Higgs. "Partners across government, including the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Public Health, schools and districts, will continue to work together to mitigate risks while keeping students in the classroom to the greatest extent possible."

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has made updates to the outbreak management process, including creating a dedicated COVID-19 response team to improve response time and reporting on outbreaks in schools. In the coming days, a new dashboard will be available on the Healthy and Safe Schools website.

Confirmed cases in schools and child-care facilities

Positive cases have been confirmed in schools and child-care facilities in Zone 1 (Moncton region) and Zone 6 (Bathurst region).

The respective school or child-care communities have been notified. If you or a family member have been in close contact with a case, you will be notified by Public Health or the school or facility for contact tracing. If you are not notified directly, you have not been identified as a close contact.

As per New Brunswick's Healthy and Safe Schools guidelines, schools with cases will close or move to online learning for at least one calendar day to support contact tracing, risk assessments and operational responses. Districts have contacted families directly with specific information regarding any impact on learning, including information on home learning, if required.

Zone 1 (Moncton region) – A positive case was confirmed at the following schools: École Sainte-Bernadette; Hillsborough School; and Edith Cavell School, all located in Moncton. A positive case was also confirmed at each of the following early learning and child care facilities: Garderie Mon école - My School Child Care in Notre-Dame and at East Coast Kids Child Care & Learning Center in Hillsborough.

Zone 6 (Bathurst region) – A positive case was confirmed at Académie Assomption in Bathurst.

Since Sept. 7, 76 schools and 41 early learning and child-care facilities have had confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Booster dose of mRNA vaccines for residents in long-term care

A booster dose of an mRNA vaccine will be administered beginning this week to residents in nursing homes and other communal settings who have already received two doses of a vaccine.

"Long-term care residents and seniors living in communal settings generally had a good immune response to COVID-19 vaccines," said Russell. "But there are some signs that protection against the Delta variant could be waning in these individuals and a booster dose may improve their immune response."

The recommended interval for a booster dose of mRNA vaccine is at least five months after the second dose.

Additional information is available online.

Vaccination update

Public Health reported today that 80.7 per cent of eligible New Brunswickers are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and 89.7 per cent have received their first dose of a vaccine.

If you have not yet had your first or second dose, you are asked to go to a walk-in clinic or book an appointment through a participating pharmacy or at a Vitalité or Horizon health network clinic as soon as possible.

All eligible New Brunswickers can book their second-dose appointments for a date that is at least 28 days after their first dose.

Those attending a vaccination clinic are asked to bring their Medicare card, a signed consent form and, for those receiving their second dose, a copy of the record of immunization provided after receiving their first dose.

A list of upcoming mobile and walk-in clinics is available online.

The 45 new cases in Zone 1 (Moncton region) are as follows:

- fifteen people 19 and under;
- six people 20-29;
- nine people 30-39;
- five people 40-49;
- five people 50-59;
- three people 60-69;
- a person 70-79; and
- a person 80-89.

Forty-two cases are under investigation and three are contacts of previously confirmed cases.

The four new cases in Zone 2 (Saint John region) are as follows:

- two people 40-49;
- a person 50-59; and
- a person 60-69.

Two cases are under investigation and two are contacts of previously confirmed case.

The 25 new cases in Zone 3 (Fredericton region) are as follows:

- eight people 19 and under;
- two people 20-29;
- a person 30-39;
- four people 40-49;
- three people 50-59;
- two people 60-69; and
- five people 70-79

Eighteen cases are under investigation and seven are contacts of previously confirmed cases.

The seven new cases in Zone 4 (Edmundston region) are as follows:

- four people 19 and under;
- a person 20-29; and
- two people 70-79.

Four cases are under investigation and three are contacts of previously confirmed cases.

The one new case in Zone 5 (Campbellton region) is a person 50-59. This case is under investigation.

The five new cases in Zone 6 (Bathurst region) are as follows:

- two people 19 and under;
- a person 40-49;
- a person 60-69; and
- a person 70-79.

All five cases are under investigation.

The three new cases in Zone 7 (Miramichi region) are as follows:

- a person 19 and under; and
- two people 30-39.

All three cases are under investigation.

Additional information is available on the COVID-19 dashboard.

Potential public exposures

Anyone with symptoms of the virus, as well as anyone who has been at the site of a possible public exposure, is urged to request a test online or call Tele-Care 811 to get an appointment.

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